

Step 4: WRITING in CONTEXT Instructional Alternatives

The most effective technique for teaching writing is to provide many opportunities to write in the classroom. However, "providing many opportunities to write" does not mean that writing is a **product** produced by the students in response to the teacher's assignment. It is a **process** that writers go through to communicate and produce a written product. The writing process encompasses everything from the initial thinking about the topic through the publication of the product. The fundamental steps that all writers go through include:

- 1) **Pre-writing** - generating ideas through activities such as group discussion, brainstorming, or webbing
- 2) **Drafting** - writing a first draft in sentence - paragraph form by developing the ideas and refining the thesis
- 3) **Revising** - evaluating and rewriting in order to make the communication clear, coherent, and interesting by adding, deleting, or rearranging the material
- 4) **Editing** - proofreading to ensure that the communication is error-free with appropriate language, punctuation, spelling, and grammar usage
- 5) **Publishing** the final copy - producing a piece of writing that is complete and ready to share with others

This section contains directions for the following instructional activities that can be used during the Writing in Context component of the 5-Step Lesson Plan:

- ✓The Writing Process
- ✓20 Minute Exercise
- ✓Clustering
- ✓Topic Audience Purpose (TAP)
- ✓Unfinished Story
- ✓Re-Write the Story
- ✓Journal Entries
- ✓Bio-Poems
- ✓Cinquains
- ✓Rubrics

The Writing Process:

The message come first – the mechanics come last

This process writing framework guides students through the steps that proficient writers use when writing.

These five steps involve some form of the following:

1. **Pre-writing** - generating ideas through activities such as group discussion, brainstorming, graphic organizers, or webbing. The writer focuses on the subject, considers the audience, thinks about different forms to express ideas. This may also include researching, daydreaming, note taking, and outlining.
2. **Drafting** - writing a first draft in sentence/paragraph form by putting ideas on paper without concern for grammatical or spelling errors. Often called the “sloppy copy”, this is where the writer begins to make a commitment to the ideas to be expressed.
3. **Revising the draft** - evaluating and rewriting in order to make the writing clear, coherent, and interesting by adding, deleting, or rearranging the material. This is where the writer reconsiders the subject, form, ideas, and audience and “tweaks” the paper by rethinking, redesigning, and rewriting. This is often done by peer review and getting feedback from others.
4. **Editing** - proofreading to ensure that the communication is error-free with appropriate language, punctuation, spelling, and grammar usage. Focus is on grammar, spelling, transitions words (first, next) and signal words (for example, another reason is.) It requires line-by-line editing making sure that each word is right and each sentence is properly punctuated. The use of an editing checklist is useful.
5. **Publishing** the final copy - producing a piece of writing that is complete and ready to share with a wider audience. This may mean the rest of the class, students’ friends or family, or the internet community. Publishing can take the form of displays on the classrooms walls, compilations into books, newsletters or newspapers, or websites.

Source: Adapted from “Teaching the Writing Process to Adult Learners” Colorado Department of Education. August 2006 <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/TeachingWriting.pdf>

The following are techniques that teachers can use with students to help with the writing process.

- **Talk** with the students about their writing. Help them clarify their messages and state explicitly what they are trying to say. Use questions such as:
 - "So, are you saying that ...?"*
 - "This is your main point so far, what else would you like to say?"*
 - "Does this piece seem finished to you?"*
 - "What part of this piece do you like best?"*

What will you add to your story?
What did you do well in this piece?
What do you do well as a writer?
What are some other topics you might write about?
Who are the good writers you know?
What do they do when they get stuck?
How is this piece like others you've written?
How is it different?
What did you learn about writing by writing this piece?

- Give **feedback** to the students by telling them of the words or images that stand out for you as a reader. Describe what you feel, think and experience as a reader and at what points in the text. Greet every trial or "approximation" the student attempts with encouragement and immediate, constructive feedback.
- Give **suggestions** by using such statements as "If I were writing this I would _____ because I _____." It is important to respond to the message first and then target errors.
- Hold short, frequent **conferences** with each student. Try to limit the student's response and yours to one concern. Take one step at a time. If you do not know how to respond, draw more about the process out of the student or encourage the student to expand on the opinions stated in the text.
- Organize **peer conferencing** so that learners can work in pairs to share and discuss their work. Encourage them to help each other clarify ideas or expressions, add or delete information or correct grammatical and spelling errors.
- Teach **drafting techniques**, such as:
 - Leaving room on the paper for making additions and changes by writing on one side of paper, leaving wide margins or writing on every other line. Use scratch paper to save paper.
 - Not worrying about being perfect at the "drafting stage. Focus on getting the message on paper. Corrections in grammar, word choice and spelling can come later.
 - Crossing out without taking time to erase. Erasing wastes time and sometimes causes useful ideas to be lost forever.
- **Celebrate** closure by asking the students to read their finished products aloud to the class. Display student writings around the classroom or gather them into a book, newsletter or class anthology. Include the writing in the student's portfolio.

20 Minute Writing Exercise

This is a form of pre-writing that gets students writing immediately

Directions:

1. **Select one of the topics. (2 minutes)**

<i>unemployment</i>	<i>drugs</i>	<i>jobs</i>	<i>immigration</i>
<i>sports</i>	<i>houses</i>	<i>MTV</i>	<i>pets</i>
<i>elections</i>	<i>violence</i>	<i>computers</i>	<i>budgets</i>
<i>books</i>	<i>voting</i>	<i>foreign aid</i>	<i>crime</i>
<i>buses</i>	<i>schoolsdiet</i>	<i>cars</i>	<i>parenting</i>

2. **Write all you can think of on that topic. (7 minutes)**

The concern is to get information down on paper, not grammar or punctuation.

3. **From the material that you have, select the points that you feel to be the most important. (3 minutes)**

Underline or circle the points that you feel are the most important to the understanding of the topics.

4. **Develop a working thesis. (3 minutes)**

Decide what to write about. *The purpose of this paper is...*

5. **Select the points that can be used in developing and supporting your thesis. (2 minutes)**

Indicate them in any way that works for you - number, circle, color code.

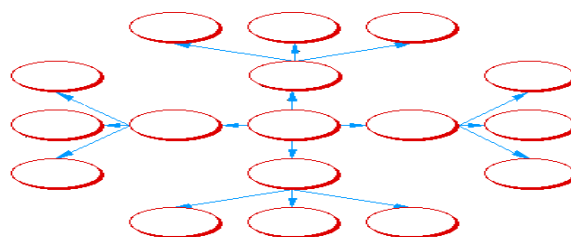
6. **Write a thesis statement that accurately reflects the work already completed. (3 minutes)**

Time to check and a possible revise your thesis statement developed in step four.

Source: Tuttle, F.B. (1986). *How to prepare students for writing tests*. A National Education Association Publication.

Clustering

This writing technique, also known as webbing or concept mapping, can be used to generate ideas for writing in any form: essays, poems, short stories, business reports, song lyrics, even novels.



In clustering, a nucleus word evokes *clusters* of associations unique to each individual responding to it. This nucleus word or short phrase acts as the stimulus for recording all the associations that spring to mind in a very brief period of time. It is a nonlinear brainstorming process akin to free association. It allows writers to begin without clear ideas.

To create a cluster,

- Begin with a nucleus word, circled on a sheet of paper.
- Let go and begin to write words or short phrases and any connection that come into your head.
- Write these rapidly, each in its own circle, radiating outward from the center in any direction.
- Connect each new word or phrase with a line to the preceding circle.
- Write down whatever comes into your head.
- If you run out of associations, doodle a bit by filling in arrows or making the lines darker.
- Connect words with lines.
- Begin to recognize patterns and sense a focus for writing.
- Look at your clusters and find your first sentence.
- Stop clustering and begin writing.
- If you feel stuck, write about anything from the cluster to get you started.
- There is no need to force everything from your cluster into your writing. Choose only what seems to fit as you “story” your thinking.
- Conclude by referring back to what started your thinking in the first sentence. You can do this by repeating a word, a phrase, a dominant thought, or an emotion that was presented in your opening line or two.

Source: San Diego County Office of Education

<http://www.sdcoc.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/tcluster.htm>

Topic Audience Purpose (TAP)

Use this graphic organizer to help conceptualize a writing project

Topic	Audience	Purpose
<ul style="list-style-type: none">-What am I writing about?-What do I know about this topic?-What additional information do I need to write about this topic?-Where will I find this information?-Can the topic be narrowed down?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Who will read what I write?-What does my audience already know about the topic?-What opinions will my audience have on the topic?-How will the intended audience influence what I write and the way I write it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-What do I want this piece of writing to accomplish?-What reaction or response do I want my audience to have?-How will my purpose for writing influence what I write and how I write it?

The Unfinished Story

*This activity sparks creativity as students read carefully,
then create original conclusions to a story.*

Directions:

1. Begin telling or reading a story
2. Stop at a climactic point
3. Give students time to write a conclusion
4. Pairs read to each other their conclusions and work together on both papers to correct errors
5. Pairs combine into foursomes. Everyone reads their conclusion hears three other conclusions
6. These groups choose one conclusion for presentation to the whole class
7. The class votes on their favorite conclusion

Re-Write the Story

*This writing activity allows students to flex their imagination
as they re-write stories read in class.*

Directions:

After completing a reading, ask student to re-write the story using any of the following prompts:

- Change the main character
- Have the story take place somewhere else
- Have the story take place in another time
- Tell the story from a different character's point of view
- Make the problem of the story different
- Change an important item in the story
- Change the end of the story
- Change the gender of an important character

Journal Entries

"How do I know what I'm thinking until I see it on paper?" Anonymous

Journal entries help students:

- express their thoughts, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values, habits and strategies without fear of being right or wrong
- discover insights about themselves
- use writing to communicate what they know about a topic
- realize that they know a lot
- establish a visual record of their writing development
- collect their thoughts and prepare for the day's lesson or review the previous lesson
- let the teacher know of their needs

In journal writing the student's message is the most important thing. It is an opportunity for promoting communication between students and teacher. If possible, implement dialogue journal writing, which is a student-teacher conversation, in your classroom. Usually journal entries are handwritten in a bound notebook in which students write about the day's topic or one of their own choosing. The teacher accepts what is written and responds as directly and openly as possible. It is an open exchange of ideas.

The teacher does not grade or correct the writing and does not respond with simple platitudes or evaluative comments such as "good" or "interesting point" but offers comments, observations, opinions and asks additional questions as in a "good conversation". The teacher may **model** some of the words and structures used incorrectly by the students, but the teacher responds to the content rather than the imperfections of the student's writing.

The goal of journal writing is to get students to become accustomed to expressing themselves in written language. It is an opportunity for them to develop the courage to take risks and write what they feel without fear of judgment.

Source: Peyton, J.K., and Reed L. *Dialogue Journal Writing with Non-native English Speakers: A Handbook for Teachers*, 1990.

Sample Writing Prompts/Journal Topics

What is...

- What is something you dislike about yourself?
- What is something you do well?
- What is your favorite room in your home and why?
- What is a good neighbor?
- What is the worst thing parents can do to their children?
- What is your favorite time of day?
- What is your idea of a dull evening?
- What is the best way to treat meddlesome people?
- What is something you are optimistic about?
- What is something you are pessimistic about?
- What is your most indispensable possession and why?
- What is the meaning of "He laughs best who laughs last"?
- What is your favorite song and why?
- What is the best birthday present you ever received?
- What is the best birthday present you could receive?
- What is something that makes you feel sad?
- What is your favorite book and why?
- What is something that really bugs you?
- What is something that really makes you angry?
- What is the best advice you ever received?
- What is your favorite holiday? What makes this holiday special?
- What is your favorite day of the week?
- What is your favorite month? Why?

What if...

- What would happen if you could fly whenever you wanted? When would you use this ability?

What would happen if there were no television? Why would this be good? bad?

What would happen if everyone lived in space? What type of houses would they live in? What type of clothing would they wear? What type of food would they eat? How would they travel?

What if cows gave root beer instead of milk?

What if all the streets were rivers? What would be different?

What would happen if people never co-operated? Why do you think it is important to co-operate?

What would happen if it really did rain cats and dogs?

What would happen if animals could talk? What are some of the questions you would like to ask animals?

What would happen if you could become invisible whenever you wanted to? What are some of the things you could do that you cannot do now?

What would happen if everyone wore the same clothes?

What would happen if you threw a piece of trash on the ground? What if everyone did?

What if you could walk up walls and across ceilings?

What would happen if you loved your neighbor as yourself? What if everyone did?

What would happen if you grew taller than trees? How would this change your life?

What would happen if children ruled the world?

What would happen if there were no cars, buses, trains, boats, or planes? How would this change your life?

What if everyone lived under water? Where would people live? What games would children play? What would school be like?

What would happen if you found gold in your backyard?

What would you do if a bully bothered you on your way home?

What would you do if you did very poorly of a test?

What would you do if a friend borrows things from you but never returns them?

What would you do if You were the teacher and everyone forgot his homework?

What would you do if you were in the middle of the lake and your boat began to leak?

What would you do if Your friend had a broken leg? How would you cheer him up?

What would you do if you saw little bugs in your salad?

What would you do if you woke up in another country and no one could understand you?

What would you do if you ordered an ice cream cone and you forgot to bring money?

What would you do if someone got in front of you when you were in line at the movies?

What would you do if your jelly sandwich fell upside down on the floor?

What would you do if only one hot dog is left and neither you nor your friend have had one?

What would you do if two of your best friends went to the movies without inviting you?

What would you do if the surprise party was for you but you weren't surprised?

What would you do if you got a present you didn't like?

What would you do if you were at home and your homework was at school?

What would you do if you dropped the cookie jar and it broke?

What would you do if you were invited to two parties on the same day?

What would you do if you promised to feed your pet and you didn't?

What would you do if someone said you did something wrong and you didn't?

What would you do if your new shoes felt fine in the store but now they are hurting?

What would you do if someone told you a joke that you don't think is funny?

What would you do if an hour before the party you remember you don't have a gift?

What would you do if a friend comes to your house and his/her mom doesn't know he's/she's there?

What would you do if you had four math problems marked wrong that were right?

What would you do if you found in the street?

What would you do if you found a magic wand?
What would you do if you wanted to be friends with someone who spoke no English?
What would you say if someone told you it was all right to steal from a large department store?
What would you do if you saw a friend cheating--report it, confront the friend, nothing--and why?

If

If you could have been someone in history, who would you have been?
If you could only take 3 people with you on a trip around the world, who would you take and why?
If you could give any gift in the world, what would you give and to whom?
If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
If you received any sum of money as a gift, what would you do with it?
If you could do whatever you wanted to right now, what would you do?
If you were principal of this school, what would you do?
If you were a mouse in your house in the evening, what would you see your family doing?
If you were five years older you would...
If you were lost in the woods and it got dark, what would you do?
If it were your job to decide what shows can be on TV., how would you choose?
If there were no rules, what do you think would happen?
If you owned a store, what would you do to discourage people from stealing from you?
If you could participate in an Olympic event, which one would you choose and why?
If you could break the Guinness Book of Records it would be for?
If you had to describe yourself as a color, which would you choose?
If your friend told you of a secret plan to run away from home, what would you do and why?

What do you think...

What do you think of 3D movies?
What do you think someone your age can do to help reduce the amount of pollution in our environment?
What do you think the world needs now?
What do you think your friends say to each other when you're not around?
What do you think about the amount of violence on T.V.?
What do you think about people polluting the environment?
What do you think about having set rules for people to follow?
What do you think about people who are inconsiderate of others?
What do you think should be done to keep people who are under the influence of alcohol off the road?
What do you think the world will be like when you are a grown up?
What do you think about ghosts?
What do you think of someone who has bad manners?
What do you think about people who take advantage of others?
What do you think about when you can't fall asleep?
What do you think courage means?
What do you think makes a good friend?
What do you think makes a happy family?
What pollutants do you think do the most damage and why?
What things do you think are beautiful?
What do you think about students having to wear school uniforms?

What...misc.

What do you like most about yourself?
What do you like to do in your free time?
What kind of animal would you like to be and why?
What kind of trophy would you like to win?
What TV or movie star would you like to invite to your birthday party?
What does "Clothes make the person" mean to you?
What does "Have your cake and eat it too" mean to you?
What does "The early bird gets the worm" mean to you?
What do we mean when we say, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"?
What does "You can't take it with you" mean?
What do we mean when we say, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar"?
What do we mean when we say, "Hitch your wagon to a star"?
What does "still waters run deep" mean to you?
What does "There are two sides to every coin" mean to you?
What does "freedom" mean to you?
What are you afraid of? Why?
What are junk foods?
What are some nutritious foods that you like?
What are some rules you have to follow at home?
What are some examples of prejudice?
What is more important to you, appearance or personality?
What is most important to you in a friend--loyalty, generosity, honesty--why?
What is something that makes you melancholy?
What makes your best friend your best friend?
What makes you feel safe?
What makes you laugh?
What would you invent to make life better?
What would you do to entertain your family without spending any money?
What effects does watching violence have on people?
What effects do cigarette and alcohol advertising have on young people?
What kind of TV. commercial would you like to make? Describe it.
What kind of pet would you most like to have--monkey, snake, goat--why?
What kind of program do you enjoy most on TV--detective shows, comedies, game shows--and why?
What advice would you give a new student?
What advice would you give to someone who stole something but now feels guilty?
What things are better than going to school? Why?
What talents do you have?
What three words would describe you right now?
What four things are most important in your life?
What color makes you think of happiness?
What has been the most fun activity at school so far?
What quality do you like about yourself--creativity, personality, appearance--why?
What eccentric behavior in a friend disturbs you the most?
What parts of nature do you like best?
What do you do for exercise?
What is the most ludicrous outfit you can think of?
What is the funniest dinner you've ever had with your family?

How...

How do you feel when it's your birthday? Why?
How do you feel on the first day of winter? Why?
How would you feel if you were going to be on a show? Why?
How do you feel when you do something wrong?
How do you feel when you do something that is very good?
How do you feel when you play a trick on someone?
How would you feel if a new child moved into your neighborhood?
How do you think the new child would feel?
How do you feel when you have had a fight with your best friend?
How do you think your friend felt?
How do you feel when you are in bed with the lights out?
How do you feel when you want something very badly and you cannot have it? Why is this so important to have?
How do you feel on a warm sunny day?
How do you feel when you stay with a babysitter?
How do you feel when you're leaving home on vacation?
How do you feel when you sleep at someone's house?
How do you feel during a thunderstorm?
How do you feel on the first day of school?
How do you feel when your parents are upset with you? Why do they become upset with you?
How do you feel on Thanksgiving? What are you thankful for?
How do you feel on (any holiday)?
How do you feel when something scares you? What do you do when this happens?
How would you feel if someone told you that you were his or her best friend?
How do you feel about your appearance?
How would you change the world to make it better?
How do you think eating junk food affects you?
How do you have the most fun--alone, with a large group, with a few friends--and why?
Explain how to play your favorite game.
How would you describe your house to someone who has never visited there before?

I wish...

I wish I had a million... Then I would...
I wish I had one... because
I wish I could be like.... This person is special because....
I wish to be a _____ when I grow up. Then I will....
I wish there were a law that said..... This would be a good law because....
I wish I could forget the time I because....
I wish trees could..... because....
I wish I could see..... because....
I wish I could learn..... because....
I wish I didn't have to eat..... I don't like this food because....
I wish everyone would learn to Then everyone would.....
I wish I never.....
I wish I had one more chance to..... Then I would.....
I wish there was an electric.....

I wish I had enough money to.....
I wish everyone loved.....
I wish all children would.....
I wish everyone had.....
I wish I could touch.....
I wish animals could..... If they could, then.....
I wish I looked like.... because.....
I wish there were no more.....
I wish I didn't have to.....
I wish I could go to.....
I wish there really was..... If there really was, then.....
I wish I could hear.....
I wish I could give.....
If all my wishes came true, I would.....

When...

When you are angry, how do you look?
When are you happiest?
When have you felt lonely?
When do you feel proud?
When was the last time you cried and why?
When a friend was in an embarrassing situation, what did you do?
When it might hurt their feelings, how do you feel about telling your friends the truth?
When might it be bad to be honest?
When someone picks on someone else, how do you feel? What do you do?
Once, when you were very frightened, what happened?
Once, when you were embarrassed, what happened?
Once, when your feelings were hurt, what happened?
Describe a time when you felt vengeful.
When you have a problem who do you talk to? Why?

Which...

Which quality best describes your life--exciting, organized, dull--and why?
Which quality do you dislike most about yourself--laziness, selfishness, childishness--and why?
Which place would you most like to visit--Africa, China, Alaska--why?
Which holiday has the most meaning for you--Canada Day, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day--and why?
Which is least important to you--money, power, fame--and why?
Which is most important to you--being popular, accomplishing things, being organized--and why?
Which is your favorite Star Wars character (or other movie/book/TV. show, etc.)? Why?

Why...

Why is it important to be honest?
Why is important to have good manners?
Why do you think adults smoke/drink?
Why is exercise important to someone your age?
Why do you think some people encourage others to smoke/drink?
Why do you think the rules you must follow are good or bad?
Why would it be good to be honest?

Why have men and women usually only done certain types of work?
Why should or shouldn't a man stay home to care for the house and children while his wife goes to work?
Why do you think some people take advantage of others?
Why do you think prejudice exists in the world?
Why would we say that someone is "passing the buck"?
Why would a Prime Minister have a sign on his desk which read, "The buck stops here"?
Why do you think tact is an important quality?
Why is it not wise to squander your money?
Explain why we say, "dead as a door nail".
Think of your favorite toy. Why do you like it best?
Think of the best teacher you ever had. Why were they a good teacher?

Misc...

Do you think there is too much fighting on TV. Why or why not?
Do you think it is necessary to have alcohol at a party in order to have a good time?
Does it bother you to be around someone who has bad manners?
Should there be a dress code in places such as school, restaurants, and places of business? Why or why not?
Should animals be used for medical research?
Should the Canadian Government financially support Olympic teams?
Should people be prohibited from smoking in certain places?
Families are important because...
Would you like to be famous? Why or why not? What would you like to be famous for?
Who or what has had a strong influence in your life?
Where would you prefer to be right now--mountains, desert, beach--and why?
Should you have to do chores around the house? Why or why not?
Should you be required to wear a bike helmet? Why or why not?
Should skateboards be allowed on sidewalks?
Where do you think we should go on our class fieldtrip this year? Why?
Should you have to take tests in school?
Should cell phones be allowed in school?
Can television (or videogames) influence your behavior? How?
Should schools be year-round?
Should junk food be banned from schools?
Should students be required to learn a second language?

Source: Can Teach <http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html>

Bio -Poem

*A Bio-poem is a poem that describes a person in a prescribed format.
They are useful as an introduction to a student's portfolio.*

Bio-poems can be of any length and they don't have to be eleven lines long. The number of ideas in each line can vary; but, they should include descriptive, colorful language that let the students creatively express themselves and who they are.

- Line 1: Your first name only
- Line 1: Four traits that describe you
- Line 1: Sibling of ... (or Wife of, or Mother of, or Friend of)
- Line 1: Lover of ... (3 people or ideas)
- Line 1: Who feels ... (3 responses)
- Line 1: Who needs ... (3 responses)
- Line 1: Who gives ... (3 responses)
- Line 1: Who fears ... (3 responses)
- Line 1: Who would like to see ... (3 responses)
- Line 1: Resident of ... (City, State)
- Line 1: Your last name only

CINQUAIN: A Stanza of 5 Lines

Cinquain (pronounced "cin-kain") is a five-line poetic form using a prescribed sequence of words

Cinquain is a sequence of words using the following format:

- first line: 1 word
- second line: 2 words
- third line: 3 words
- fourth line: 4 words
- last line: 1 word

Following the teaching of a major concept, students can create cinquains that show what they learned. Here are 2 examples:

Example:

Learning
Growing dendrites
Making numerous connections
Celebrations in the brain
Thinking

Example

Brain
Social organism
Thinking, linking, connecting
Necessary for life itself
Life

Source: Tate, M. L. (2004). "Sit and get" won't grow dendrites - professional learning strategies that engage the adult brain. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Students can write cinquains as a follow-up to a subject they have been exploring in class such as after reading a poem or short story

- Line 1: One word that tells what the poem is about
- Line 2: Two words that describe the subject
- Line 3: Three words that describe something the subject does
- Line 4: Four to six words describing the subject further
- Line 5: One or two words that rename what the poem is about (a synonym)

Example

Rainforest
Wet, Noisy
Dripping, Climbing, Swinging
Monkeys Playing in the Canopy
Habitat

Example

Grace
Amazing, Smart
Acting, Dancing, Flying
Anything She Wants To Be
Grace

Cinquain Reflections can be used upon completion of a cinquain activity:

1. What do you like most about your poem?
2. If you could change something about the poem, what would you change?
3. Of the poems that you heard when we shared our cinquain, which poems did you like best and why?

Source: Read Write Think <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/composing-cinquain-poems-quick-51.html>

Rubrics

Rubrics are assessment tools developed by instructors to evaluate the performances of their students.

- Rubrics differ from traditional methods of assessment because they clearly show students how their work is being evaluated.
- Rubrics describe the gradations of quality (levels) for each dimension of the performance to be evaluated, and assigns a point value to each gradation of quality.
- Rubrics are typically used with assessments that are subjective such as papers, portfolios, projects, presentations, or discussions.
- Rubrics make the instructor's expectations clear to the students and what they need to do to be successful.
- Rubrics help students evaluate the quality of their own work.
- If more than one person is evaluating the performance, it improves the consistency and objectivity (standardization) of grading.

Resources for making customized rubrics:

TeAch-nology.com http://www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/rubrics/

Rubistar <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/>

Teacher Vision <http://www.teachervision.fen.com/teaching-methods-and-management/rubrics/4521.html>

The following are a few sample rubrics:

GED 2002 Essay Scoring Guide

	1	2	3	4
	Inadequate	Marginal	Adequate	Effective
	Reader has difficulty identifying or following the writer's ideas.	Reader occasionally has difficulty understanding or following the writer's ideas.	Reader understands writer's ideas.	Reader understands and easily follows the writer's expression of ideas.
Response to the Prompt	Attempts to address prompt but with little or no success in establishing a focus.	Addresses the prompt, though the focus may shift.	Uses the writing prompt to establish a main idea.	Presents a clearly focused main idea that addresses the prompt.
Organization	Fails to organize ideas.	Shows some evidence of an organizational plan.	Uses an identifiable organizational plan	Establishes a clear and logical organization
Development and Details	Demonstrates little or no development; usually lacks details or examples or presents irrelevant information.	Has some development but lacks specific details; may be limited to a listing, repetitions or generalizations.	Has focused but occasionally uneven development; incorporates some specific detail.	Achieves coherent development with specific and relevant details and examples
Conventions of EAE	Exhibits minimal or no control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE.	Demonstrates inconsistent control of sentence structure and the conventions of EAE.	Generally controls sentence structure and the conventions of EAE.	Consistently controls sentence structure and the conventions of Edited American English (EAE).
Word Choice	Exhibits weak and/or inappropriate words.	Exhibits a narrow range of word choice, often including inappropriate selections.	Exhibits appropriate word choice.	Exhibits varied and precise word choice.

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Journals – Rubric

DIRECTIONS: This form is designed to help you evaluate student work in journal writing. Read each statement below. Then indicate from the following rating scale that best reflects your assessment of the student's work.

1=Weak 2=Somewhat Weak 3=Average 4= Strong 5=Very Strong

1. The topic of the journal entry meets the requirements of the assignment.

1 2 3 4 5

2. The journal entry covers various aspects of a person's life which shows the student's understanding of that person's way of life.

1 2 3 4 5

3. The entries provide very descriptive explanation of that person's surroundings.

1 2 3 4 5

4. The organization of the journal entries are clear and easy to follow.

1 2 3 4 5

5. The journal entry flows smoothly from one idea to another.

1 2 3 4 5

6. The spelling, grammar, and punctuation in the journal is accurate.

1 2 3 4 5

7. The journal entry is neatly typed or handwritten.

1 2 3 4 5

8. The journal entries are bound together neatly with a cover.

1 2 3 4 5

9. The journal offers various experiences and perspectives of that person's life.

1 2 3 4 5

10. The effort put forth has demonstrated the full potential of the student's capability.

1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:

Total Points: _____

Far West GREAT Center
Paragraph Writing Rubric

Name: _____

Teacher: Baird

Date Submitted: _____

Title of Work: _____

Criteria					Points
	4	3	2	1	
Main/Topic Idea Sentence	Main/Topic idea sentence is clear, correctly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is either unclear or incorrectly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is unclear and incorrectly placed, and is restated in the closing sentence.	Main/Topic idea sentence is unclear and incorrectly placed, and is not restated in the closing sentence.	_____
Supporting Detail Sentence(s)	Paragraph(s) have three or more supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph(s) have two supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph(s) have one supporting detail sentence that relate back to the main idea.	Paragraph(s) have no supporting detail sentences that relate back to the main idea.	_____
Elaborating Detail Sentence(s)	Each supporting detail sentence has three or more elaborating detail sentences.	Each supporting detail sentence has at least two elaborating detail sentences.	Each supporting detail sentence has one elaborating detail sentence.	Each supporting detail sentence has no elaborating detail sentence.	_____
Legibility	Legible handwriting, typing, or printing.	Marginally legible handwriting, typing, or printing.	Writing is not legible in places.	Writing is not legible.	_____
Mechanics and Grammar	Paragraph has no errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Paragraph has one or two punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has three to five punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	Paragraph has six or more punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors.	_____
				Total---->	_____

Teacher Comments:

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Far West GREAT Center

Research Report Rubric

Name: _____

Teacher: Baird

	Criteria				Points
	4	3	2	1	
Introduction/ Topic	Student(s) properly generate questions and or problems around a topic.	Student(s) generate questions and or problems.	Student(s) require prompts to generate questions and or problems.	Questions or problems are teacher generated.	_____
Conclusions Reached	Numerous detailed conclusions are reached from the evidence offered.	Several detailed conclusions are reached from the evidence offered.	Some detailed conclusions are reached from the evidence offered.	A conclusion is made from the evidence offered.	_____
Information Gathering	Information is gathered from multiple electronic and non-electronic sources and cited properly.	Information is gathered from multiple electronic and non-electronic sources.	Information is gathered from limited electronic and non-electronic sources.	Information is gathered from non-electronic or electronic sources only.	_____
Summary Paragraph	Well organized, demonstrates logical sequencing and sentence structure.	Well organized, but demonstrates illogical sequencing or sentence structure.	Well organized, but demonstrates illogical sequencing and sentence structure.	Weakly organized.	_____
Punctuation, Capitalization, & Spelling	Punctuation and capitalization are correct.	There is one error in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are two or three errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	There are four or more errors in punctuation and/or capitalization.	_____
				Total---->	_____

Teacher Comments:

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Far West GREATCenter

Portfolio Notebook Rubric

Name: _____

Teacher: Baird

	Criteria				Points
	4	3	2	1	
Completion of Required Sections	All required sections are complete.	One required section is missing.	Two or three required sections are missing.	More than three required sections are missing.	_____
Missing Sections	No sections of the notebook are missing.	One sections of the notebook is missing.	Two sections of the notebook are missing.	Three or more sections of the notebook are missing.	_____
Headers / Footers	No required header(s) and/or footer(s) are missing within notebook.	One or two required header(s) and/or footer(s) are missing within notebook.	Three or four required header(s) and/or footer(s) are missing within notebook.	More than four required header(s) and/or footer(s) are missing within notebook.	_____
Organization	All assignment and/or notes are kept in a logical or numerical sequence.	One or two assignments and/or notes are not in a logical or numerical sequence.	Three or Four assignments and/or notes are not in a logical or numerical sequence.	More than four assignments and/or notes are not in a logical or numerical sequence.	_____
Neatness	Overall notebook is kept very neat.	Overall notebook is kept in a satisfactory condition.	Overall notebook is kept in a below satisfactory condition.	Overall notebook is unkept and very disorganized.	_____
				Total---->	_____

Teacher Comments: